

VISIT...

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Gentle Joseki, part V by Pieter Mioch

The Patterns

Black attaches

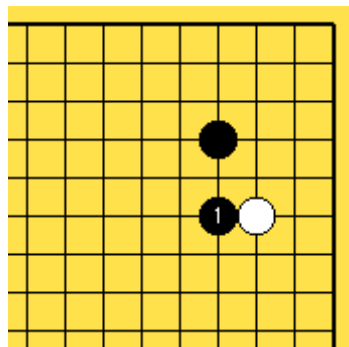


Diagram 1

This time I will try to tell you everything (well, a lot anyway) about what happens after the attachment play of black 1 in dia 1.

A different story

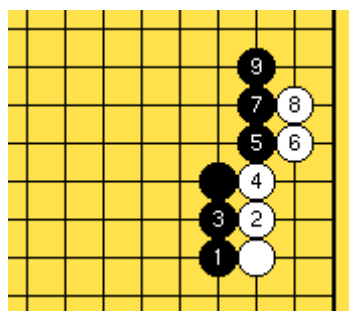


Diagram 2

In dia 2 you can see black 1, the same move as in dia 1, played in a different situation. Now it's not played in the corner but on the side of the board. I think that the continuation given here is the most straightforward and simple possible. I don't know about you but ever since I learned this game I have felt like answering black's attachment (tsuke) 1 at white 2.

Regardless whether the situation is in the corner, the side or in the middle. When playing white 2 it seemed to me that black was making no territory at all and that the result was clearly good for white?.

Well, it is not. Most of the time during the opening stage of the game black will welcome it if white were to start crawling under the black stones as if there were no tomorrow.

The result in dia 2 is not such a terrible disaster for white, but black has a very nice and thick position. Also, the white stones are more or less played out already and will not help white much in the future. With the black stones it's just the other way around, although black, to be sure, did not make any territory yet his stones will continue influencing the game, possibly right up to the end. The 8 points of territory white made are more often than not a bad trade-of compared to black's thickness.

Taking the head of three stones

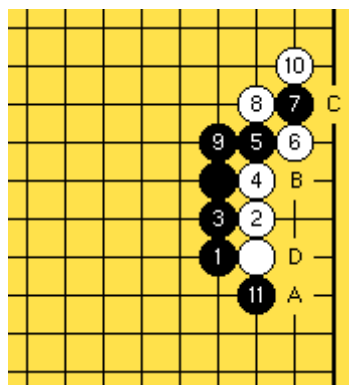


Diagram 3

In the dia 3 black plays the fierce combination of 5-7, the nidan-bane (double diagonal move, blocking you opponent's stones). It may look as if black is helping white by letting 7 get captured. In many cases, however, this line of playing will give black an even better result than dia 2. After black plays the super vital point of 11 white scoop of action is severely limited due to lack of liberties. White A leads to a disaster when black answers at B, white C and black can capture 3 stones with D.

Kikashi before defending

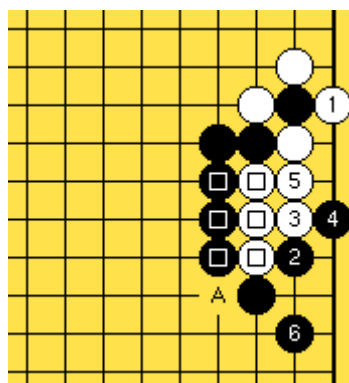


Diagram 4

Dia 4 shows a likely answer of white, eliminating all the bad "aji" (potential) and capturing at 1. Before thinking about defending his own weak points black has the nice kikashi's at 2 and 4, next it would be perfect if black could afford to defend at 6. In your own game, however, you might want to spend some time reading out what happens if white cuts at A next. If the fighting after white's cut seems too much for black it is probably a good idea to defend around A instead of 6. Wherever black chooses to defend it is important to realize that from white's point of view the exchange of the marked stones is terrible. The 3 white stones are not doing anything what so ever but black's 3 stones are influencing the whole board.

Atari before defending

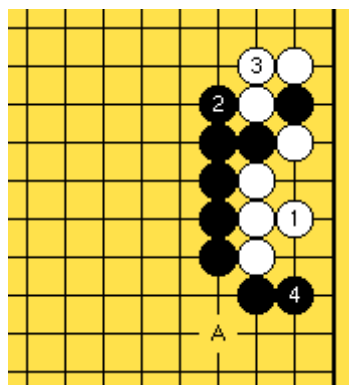
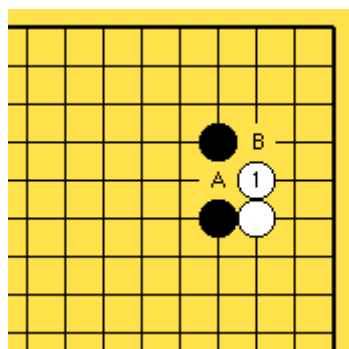


Diagram 5

In dia 5 white does not capture immediately since he doesn't like to be kikashi-ed as in the previous dia. Black now first plays an atari before descending with 4. Again, if the cut left after black 4 seems to be too bothersome, defending at A is good enough.

"That is all very, very nice, and may even be true, but what on earth has it to do with corner joseki's?" I hear you think. Well everything actually, shapes tend to develop in a similar fashion with this amazing game, even if the location is completely different. Both players, naturally, try hard to put all their stones to optimum use, this explains the phenomenon. Just that a given sequence has a nice natural flow, however, does not mean that it's the only sequence possible.

Not very promising



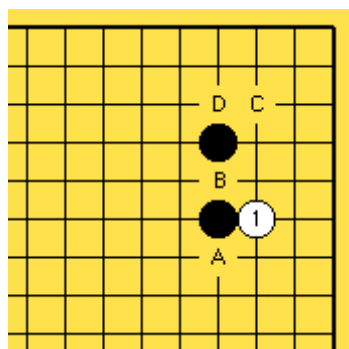
To get back to the original joseki in dia 6, it is save to say that crawling on the third line with 1 is not a very promising move for white, it is sometimes seen in professional games, not in the opening, however, but much later on in the game. You can of course try it in handicap games to confuse the situation but if black keeps his head cool and his stones together (and every now and then remembers the double hane) he will not get a bad result.

Diagram 6

Now when playing the black stones don't start being foolhardy and blindly play at A , whatever the situation. If, for example, the black stones are completely surrounded by a solid white positions and black is badly in need of some eyes do not hesitate to forget all about thickness and whatsoever. Just block at B, directly guarding the corner is the fastest way of making sure eyes, after all.

So, what exactly **are** white's option once black has attached?

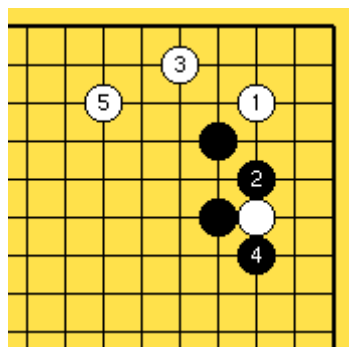
The possible continuations



Usually the only moves worth considering are A, B, C. and D. Please trust me, however, as I tell you that white C and D are mainly played with the idea in mind to frustrate the black player who very likely has studied all the available joseki books but has never heard of white playing at C or D. Both moves, however, occasionally do appear in pro games. I'll show you 2 variations for each, C and D.

Diagram 7

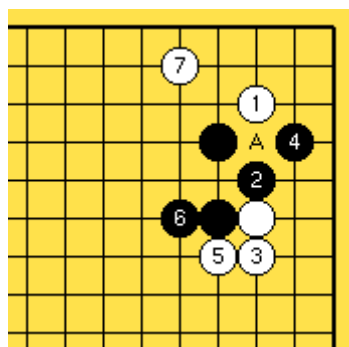
Black is thick



Black's thick, no reason to complain.

Diagram 8

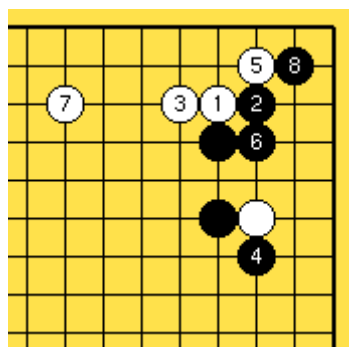
Black will fight



Black will fight. White can try to prevent black from getting a rock-solid shape and connect at 3. Black 4 is a must; black prepares himself for battle. After white 7 it might look as if white has successfully played on both sides and got away with it. Not true. The 1-7 corner has no eyes as yet and white 3-5 will have to run for life when black chooses to play a pincer at the lower right side. (I know, I know, in high handicap games the black stones have a tendency to suddenly and spontaneously die, but they shouldn't) By the way, instead of black 2 in dia 9 is black A also a fine move, going for thickness, and thickness we love, remember?

Diagram 9

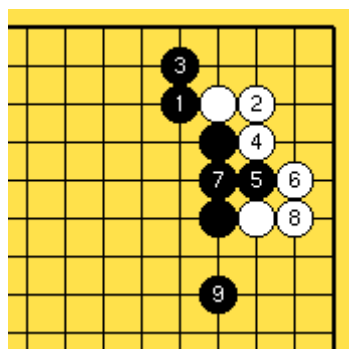
Take the 3,3 point



Blocking at the 3-3 point with 2 is seldom bad, there's some room for variation on both sides but this is very much the general idea, black keeps the corner, scores some points while white makes himself comfortable at the upper side.

Diagram 10

Take the outside

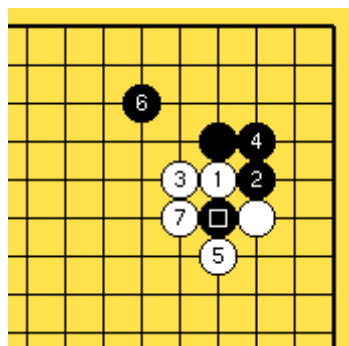


If black doesn't feel like making territory he can block on the outside and letting the corner to white. Black's strategy can be extremely efficient and powerful if he has stones on the left making his wall in to a large framework (moyo).

Diagram 11

Okay, so much for the gentle part of this episode of Gentle Joseki, now it is time to tackle the more serious moves, the ones that make you feel like you just rode your camel four 3 days through the desert when you think about them too much. (moves, not camels, that is)

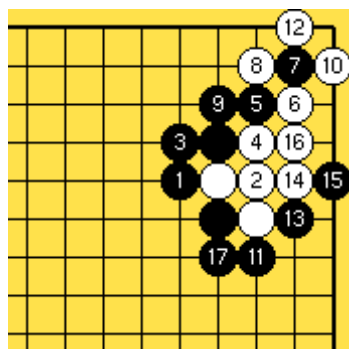
Is the ladder ok?



The white wedging move in dia 12 has the same taste as when white plays 1 at 2 and start digging himself in. It shows, however, a lot more fighting spirit and is quite playable. If white can capture black "[]" in a ladder black should try something different and not play 2-6. This result is good for white. It goes without saying that when the ladder is unfavorable white's original move 1 is very possible not ideal.

Diagram 12

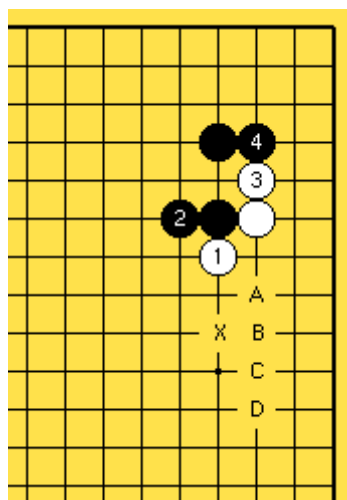
Looks familiar?



So, black will in most cases block at 1 in dia 13 after which there are, once more, plenty of variations (and there was much rejoicing). I'll give you one, which kind of looks familiar, doesn't it? Black gives up the corner when he plays the double hane at 7. Next when black takes the vital point of 11 it becomes clear that white 's making some territory while keeping the initiative and black makes a wall. White might somewhere along the line try to play atari at 17. He must be careful, however, with his timing when to play here. If white plays atari after black has played at 11 black will sacrifice one stone and play at 16, white 12, black 13, white captures, black 14 and white has to fill in, white being squeezed and all will be in for difficult fighting.

Diagram 13

How to extend?

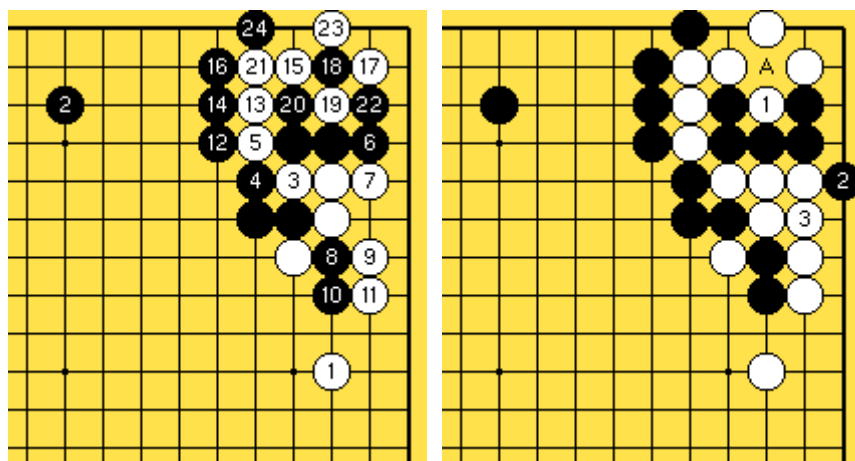


I guess most of you have seen this appearing in a game or two already, it is the most common way of handling the black attachment. Next white can choose between A, B or C. To extend all the way to D is overdoing things. After white played D he'll have a hard time dealing with a black play at X or B.

Extending to A or B makes it possible for white to move between the black stones and try to start a fight. When white has played the C extension he should not try to cut, see dia 15 and 15a.

Diagram 14

Oops, it's a ko!



Because white 1 is a little far white has to play at 7 in order to guard against the cut at 8 and, at the same time, keep the struggle for liberties (semeai) alive in the corner by filling one of black's liberties in. Black, who wasn't born yesterday and read the whole sequence out right from the start, cuts with perfect timing at 8. This creates an ideal ko-threat black is going to need in the future. After black 24 it is white's turn to take the ko first. As you can see in dia 15a, however, black was waiting for this and finally plays the atari of 26. With 28 black takes back the ko and white cannot find a threat black'll answer usually.

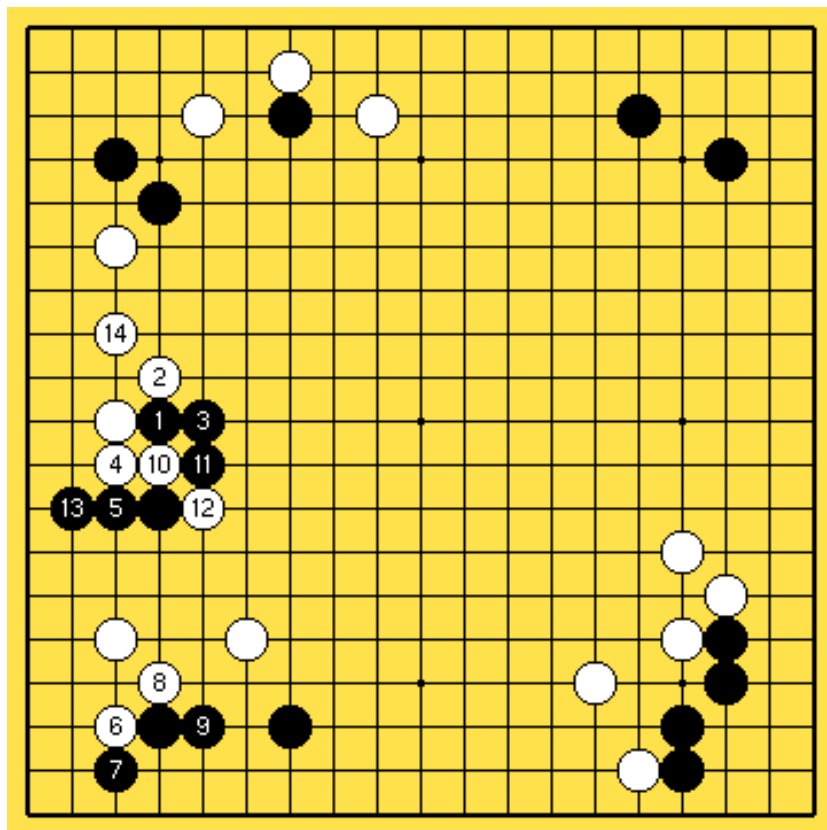
Diagram 15 & 15a

I told you a minute ago I could hear you thinking, well, I'm doing it again:

"So I replayed and studied these 2 diagrams, now what? If I'm lucky I might get a chance to use this knowledge, someday, in the next century..."

Actually, there are tons of variations during every game, which bare close resemblance to many corner joseki's. Please have a good look at dia 16.

The same sequence

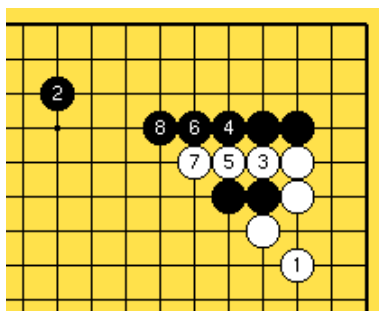


A game way back from 1927 between Kitani (black) and Hashimoto Uтарo who forced Kitani to resign this game in 216 moves.

This is nowhere near to the corner, all the same, there it is, exactly the same sequence you just, grudgingly, made your way through. Here white is not trying to capture black 5-13 so he doesn't need to stretch himself and block above 13. White solidly defends against the cut set up by excellent move black 13 and bide his time.

Diagram 16

White plays tightly

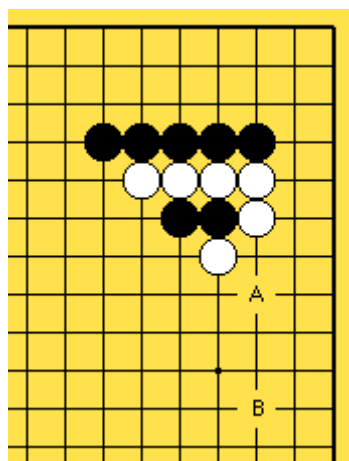


White has played the tightest possible move at, black is now tempted to play at 2, although he very well knows that the basic joseki would be to play at 6 instead.

Diagram 17

The reason why black does not defend against white's threat of pushing through is shown here in dia 17. Black doesn't even bother to put up a fight! He lets his two stones go and black is perfectly happy with the 25 some points he made. If you read through the previous editions of Gentle Joseki carefully then you know that the points black made are not the only reason for letting white get his way. The second reason why black likes this results is the *shape* of white's stones.

All about efficiency



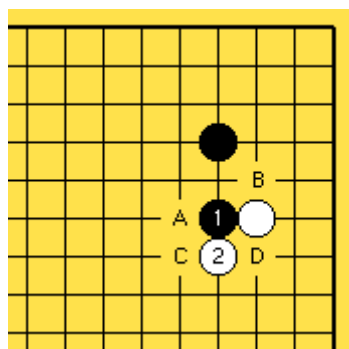
Although black's stones are all doing their job, they all work nicely together to make a solid piece of territory, white stone A is not doing too much, it is overconcentrated, too solid. If white had the choice of placing A somewhere else he would at least want to extend as far as B. In other words, if there would be a stone at B to start with and not at A black might not be so willing to let white barge through with 3-7 in the previous dia.

Diagram 18

By the way, exactly why should black attach at 1? That is a tough question to answer. One answer could be like this. Black plays the attachment because he wants to play out the situation as much as possible so he doesn't need to worry about it in the future too much.

The above is as accurate as any answer, which means that whatever reason you can come up with in any kind of situation is true as long as you have enough breath left to explain it.

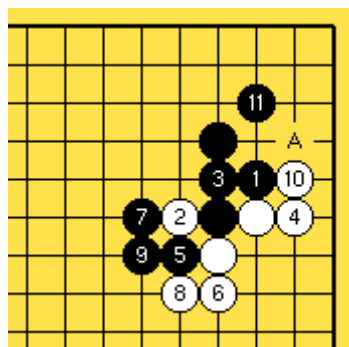
Try to experiment



To give you something you can work with, however, you need to take a look at dia 19. Black 1 often is played because black has * a plan *. Right from the moment you learn to play go you can try to experiment with A, this is a steady approach and although it can get very messy too it often doesn't and keeps things fairly simple. The moment, however, a player finds himself teaching the rules of go to somebody else and is no longer an absolute novice himself, he will start wondering if other moves are possible. Many players who are working their way through the 5-6 kyu barrier discover black B like this.

Diagram 19

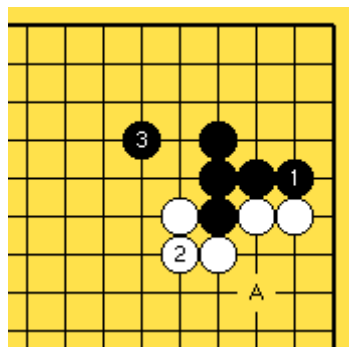
A revelation?



Black 1 in dia 20 many times comes as a revelation. All the same, it's a perfectly normal move with its due of pros and cons. Notice the quiet move of black 11, this is the best move here. Blocking white 10 immediately at A does not defend the corner properly, white very well might invade later on and make life. Instead of white 10 he sometimes might want to try to play at 11 after which black usually blocks at 10.

Diagram 20

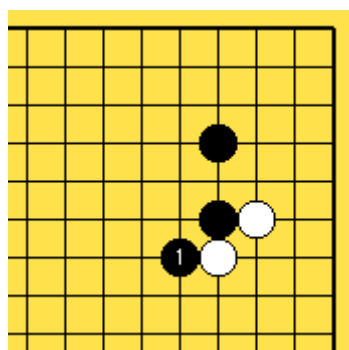
Black too eager for points?



I don't like black's way of playing in dia 21 very much, it seems black is too eager to secure points and does not care how the rest of the board looks like. Nevertheless, sigh, it is a possibility, white 2 at A is also a good move, the result is equal.

Diagram 21

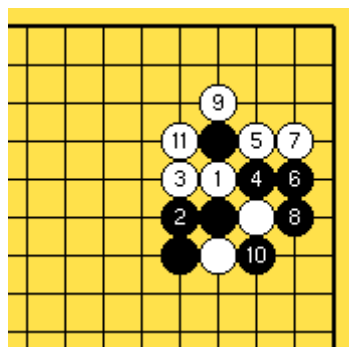
Move of a Madman



If you read Gentle Joseki 4 you'll remember that is said "The Move of a Madman?" somewhere near to the end. Here's this episode's move, which indeed looks as if black is not taking white seriously. To draw this conclusion right away, however, is a mistake. (it goes without saying I think black 1 in dia 22 shows an excellent attitude)

Diagram 22

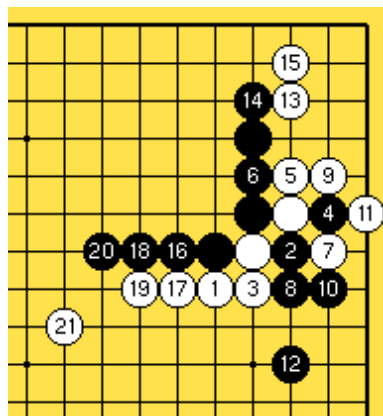
Normally better for black



White 1 is a frowned upon move. As you can see in dia 23 white managed to take the corner but black has made a very thick position in sente (while holding the initiative). The result is normally judged to be better for black. Playing black 10 at 11 leads to uncharted waters, the result is not predictable. If you are an extremely skillful fighter you can see what happens, otherwise you better forget about it and you won't miss it.

Diagram 23

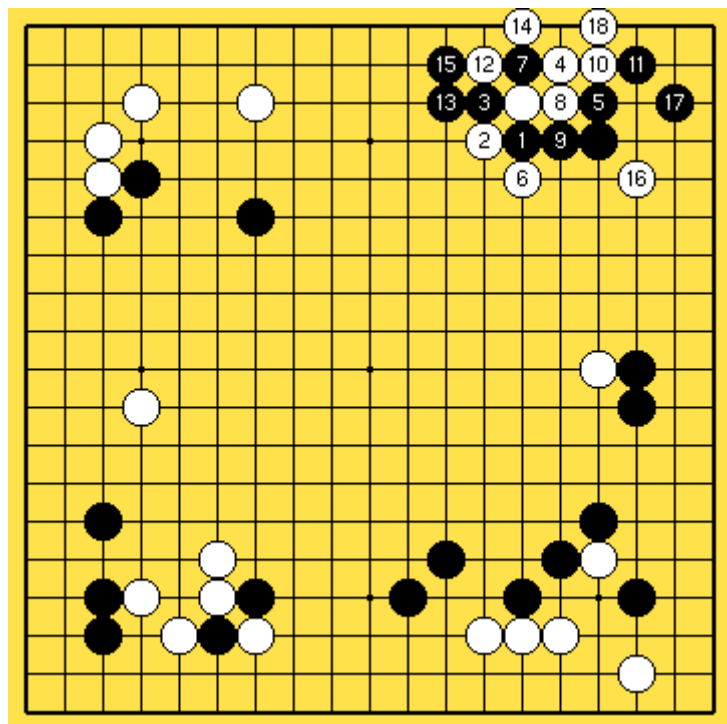
A cool tesuji



White 1 is much in the same spirit as black's original move in dia 22. The main reason why I show you this dia 24 is not the white move, however, but the outstanding move black 4. Black seems on a self-destructive course once he plays 4 but this is actually a very cool tesuji. The follow-up move of 6 is all-important. Do **not** forget it. The result is perhaps doable for white but when playing an approach move to the black 4-4 stone he certainly didn't count on this. The fighting in dia 24 is good, black is happy.

Diagram 24

Taken by surprise?



I am unfortunately not strong enough to tell you how you should judge this result. I wanted to show you that top pros do play the moves I am talking about and I'm not making it up on the spot.

Black is Korea's finest veteran Cho Hunhyun who manages to clobber Lee Sungjae in this game. Maybe it's because of black 3, which took white by surprise, maybe not, food for thought, though.

Diagram 25

Appendix 01

Index of joseki's mentioned in this episode:

